

SAFETY

IN NUMBERS

You could learn a lot from a dummy.

Keeping Children Safe In and Around Vehicles

Tragic Numbers

- 636** children have died since 1998 due to heatstroke after being left in a hot vehicle
- 210** fatalities per year caused by backover crashes
- 15,000** injuries per year caused by backover crashes
- 31%** of all backover fatalities annually are children under 5
- 1,000** estimated annual injuries by vehicle power windows

Parents in increasing numbers know that keeping a child safe in a vehicle means using child car seats and always being sure that everyone is buckled up correctly for every ride. But there are other dangers in and around vehicles that parents and caregivers need to be aware of to keep children protected.

Many children are killed or injured in backover incidents, or due to heatstroke when left unattended in a hot car, and to other dangers that can occur when children are left unattended around vehicles.

Many newer vehicles come equipped with technologies to help parents and children avoid some of these dangerous situations. However, there will never be a substitute for an attentive parent or caregiver. The best defense against many of these dangers is to never allow children in and around vehicles when unattended and always keep vehicles locked and the keys out of the reach of children.

For more information, visit:

www.SAFERCAR.gov/parents/InAndAroundTheCar/InAndAroundTheCar.htm



U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety
Administration

★★★★★
NHTSA
www.nhtsa.gov

Safety Advances Saving Lives and Preventing Injuries

- **Rear Visibility Cameras:** Many cars are equipped with detection devices that provide rearview video or warning sounds, but they don't take the place of actively walking around your car to make sure children are safely out of the way. All new vehicles must come equipped with rear visibility technology beginning in May 2018.
- **Glow in the Dark Trunk Release:** As of September 1, 2001, auto manufacturers were required to equip all new vehicle trunks with a 'glow in the dark' trunk release inside the trunk compartment.
- **Brake Transmission Shift Interlock (BTSI):** Many vehicles today have a BTSI, a technology that prevents vehicles from being put into gear unless the brake is depressed, which is intended to prevent accidental rollaway should a child shift a vehicle out of park. All vehicles with automatic transmission with a Park position, manufactured for sale after September 1, 2010, must have BTSI.
- **Pull-to-Close Window Switches:** All new vehicles will have "pull to close" switches, which require that you continuously hold the switch up in order to close the window, preventing a child from accidentally stepping on a switch and becoming caught in a closing window. Some vehicles have power windows that automatically reverse when an object (such as your child's arm or neck) is in the path of a closing window. Many will also come equipped with a power window lock switch to prevent a child from operating the window altogether.
- **Lower Anchors and Tethers for Child Safety Seats:** This is a system that makes child safety seat installation easier—without using seat belts. Using the lower anchors and tether to install a car seat may prevent seat belt entanglement because the child may not be able to reach the seat belt.



Heatstroke

Heatstroke deaths are 100-percent preventable. They can happen even on cloudy days and in outside temperatures below 70 degrees. And it happens quickly – in 10 minutes the temperature in a vehicle can rise more than 20 degrees.

Half of the infants and children who died of heatstroke inside cars were accidentally forgotten by a parent or caregiver.

Warning signs vary, but symptoms of heatstroke may include:

- red, hot, and moist or dry skin
- dizziness
- no sweating
- nausea
- a strong rapid pulse or a slow weak pulse
- confusion
- a throbbing headache
- being grouchy or acting strangely



Backover

These incidents typically occur when a vehicle coming out of a driveway or parking space backs over an unattended child.



Vehicle Rollaway

A child can shift an automatic transmission out of park and set the vehicle in motion if the key is left in the ignition and turned to accessory.



Trunk Entrapment

Heatstroke, asphyxiation or death can result if a child becomes trapped inside a vehicle's trunk.



Power Windows

Many children are injured when a window closes on their finger, wrist, or hand. Some kids have been strangled by power windows.



Seat Belt Entanglement

A child may become entangled if he or she pulls the seat belt all the way out and wraps the belt around his or her head, neck, or waist.

www.SaferCar.gov/parents/InAndAroundTheCar/InAndAroundTheCar.htm

WHAT YOU CAN DO

The two best defenses against these common incidents are:

- Never leave children unattended in a vehicle.
- Never allow them access to your vehicle's keys.

The rules need to be clear: The vehicle is not a toy or a place for play. The risks from these dangers are greatly reduced when your child isn't in or near your vehicle when not under your watchful eye.

These tips are essential to protecting children in and around vehicles.

Heatstroke

- Always check the back seats of your vehicle before you lock it and walk away.
- Keep a stuffed animal or other memento in your child's car seat when it's empty, and move it to the front seat as a visual reminder when your child is in the back seat.
- If you see a child unattended in a vehicle, do not wait more than a few minutes for the driver to return. If the child is in distress, immediately call 911, get the child out of the car, and spray the child with cool water. Good Samaritans laws protect those offering emergency assistance.
- If your child is with daycare, a babysitter, or a family member who doesn't routinely provide care, have a plan to check on status of child and make sure they're where they need to be.

Backover

- Supervise children carefully when in and around vehicles.
- Teach children to move away from a vehicle when a driver gets in it or if the car is started.
- Walk around your vehicle and check the area around it before backing up.
- When backing up, roll down the window so you can hear what's behind you and actively check mirrors and look out the back window to be sure a child doesn't dart behind your vehicle.
- While many vehicles are equipped with detection devices that provide rearview video or warning sounds they are not a replacement for safe drivers using their eyes and ears to prevent a backover.

Trunk Entrapment

- Always supervise your children carefully when in and around vehicles.
- Check the trunk right away if a child is missing.
- Keep the rear fold-down seats closed/locked to keep your children from climbing into the trunk from inside your car.
- Show your child how to use the glow in the dark trunk release in case of an emergency.
- If your car is older and does not have the 'glow in the dark' trunk release, ask your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.

Vehicle Rollaway

- Keep your vehicle locked when unattended and never leave keys in the car.
- Engage your emergency brake every time you park.
- Verify whether or not your vehicle has a Brake Transmission Safety Interlock (BTSI) by reading the owner's manual.

Power Windows

- Teach your children not to play with window switches or stand on passenger door arm rests.
- Properly restrain your children in car seats or seat belts. It not only protects them when you're driving but can also help prevent them from accidentally activating power windows and sunroofs.
- Look and make sure your kids' hands, feet, and head, are clear of windows before raising the windows.
- Never leave the key in the ignition or in the "on" or "accessory" position when you walk away from your car.
- If available, activate the power window lock switch so that your children cannot operate the windows.

Seat Belt Entanglement

- Be aware that some seat belts have a retractor that locks if pulled all the way out.
- Buckle unused seat belts.
- Use your vehicle's lower anchors and tether to install a car seat, which may prevent a child from pulling at the seat belt.

For more information, visit:

[www.SAFERCAR.gov/parents/
InAndAroundTheCar/InAndAroundTheCar.htm](http://www.SAFERCAR.gov/parents/InAndAroundTheCar/InAndAroundTheCar.htm)

DOT HS 812 141

11471PRINT-051115-v5



www.nhtsa.gov
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE.
Washington, DC 20590
1-888-327-4236

